

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03

RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 CAB-09 COME-00 EB-11 FAA-00 RSR-01

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FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8366

C O N F I D E N T I A L PANAMA 4538

E.O. 11652: GSD

TAGS: PFOR, PN, PQ

SUBJECT: TORRIJOS STATEMENT ON PILOT STRIKE.

1) SUMMARY: TORRIJOS STATEMENT OF AUGUST 25 (TRANSMITTED THROUGH ARMY CHANNELS) SEVERELY CRITICIZING GOVERNOR PARKER ON HANDLING OF CANAL PILOT SLOWDOWN HAS NOT BEEN PLAYED UP BY PANAMANIAN PRESS, I DISCUSSED STATEMENT WITH PRESIDENT LAKSAS ON AUGUST 25. RECOMMEND NO OTHER ACTION.

2) IN DISCUSSION ON AFTERNOON AUGUST 25 WITH LT. GOV. MCGINNIS I WAS INFORMED OF TORRIJOS STATEMENT AIRED ON PANAMANIAN TELEVISION. I IMMEDIATELY CALLED PRESIDENT LAKAS (TORRIJOS WAS TRAVELING WITH LEGGETT SUBCOMMITTEE) AND ASKED LAKAS IF HE WERE AWARE OF STATEMENT. HE WAS NOT BUT WAS SOMEWHAT CHAGRINED BECAUSE HE SAID THAT HE HAD STUDIOUSLY AVOIDED CONTROVERSIAL SUBJECTS DURING HIS DINNER FOR LEGGETT SUMCOMMITTEE AUGUST 24. I SAID THAT I COULD NOT UNDERSTAND TORRIJOS SUPPORT OF PILOTS BECAUSE ONE OF KEY COMPLAINTS OF U.S. PILOT ASSOCIATION WAS THAT GOVERNOR CONSIDERING RULE CHANGE WHICH WOULD MAKE PANAMANIANS ELIGIBLE FOR PILOT JOBS. LAKSA SAID THAT HE KNEW THAT. I SAID GOVERNOR WOULD NOT HAVE ANY WHERE
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NEAR TROUBLE HE NOW HAS IF HE HAD GIVEN IN TO PILOTS

AND IN VIEW TORRIJOS STATE GOVERNOR MIGHT
VERY WELL NOW DECIDE CONCEDE TO PILOTS ON THIS POINT.
LAKAS SAID THAT HE WOULD TALK TO TORRIJOS.

3) ONLY ONE PANAMANIAN NEWSPAPER HAS GIVEN PROMINENCE
TO TORRIJOS STATEMENT. DOMINICAL HEADLINED IT AUGUST
26. LA ESTRELLA HAS NOT MENTIONED IT ALTHOUGH SISTER
ENGLISH PAPER DID. MATUTINO DID NOT MENTION IT AUGUST
27. CRITICA REFERS TO IT IN EDITORIAL BUT DID NOT REPORT IT
AS NEW STORY. TREATMENT INDICATES THAT TORRIJOS MAY REALIZE
HE PUT HIS FOOT IN HIS MOUTH.

4) PILOTS AGREED RETURN TO WORK LAST NIGHT. THIS WILL
QUICKLY BECOME KNOWN TO PANAMANIAN PUBLIC WHICH WILL
CONCLUDE GOVERNOR MUST HAVE BEEN RIGHT AND TORRIJOS WRONG.
ANY STATEMENT WE MIGHT MAKE WOULD HELP GET TORRIJOS OFF
THE HOOK.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 27 AUG 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973PANAMA04538
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS SAYRE
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: PANAMA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730813/aaaaajle.tel
Line Count: 79
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 24 JAN 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <24-Jan-2002 by thigpegh>; APPROVED <13 FEB 2002 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: TORRIJOS STATEMENT ON PILOT STRIKE. 1) SUMMARY: TORRIJOS STATEMENT OF AUGUST 25 (TRANSMITTED
TAGS: PFOR, PN, PQ
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005